

Palestinian Authority condemns east Jerusalem evictions

AFP, Ramallah

The Palestinian Authority has condemned the recent eviction of multiple families from their homes in east Jerusalem and urged the international community to take "firm measures" to halt the displacements.

Several families were removed from their homes in the neighbourhood of Silwan in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem on Wednesday, AFP journalists saw.

Silwan has for decades been the target of a policy allowing Jews who lost property before the establishment of Israel in 1948 to reclaim it.

Israeli rights group B'Tselem said the evictions were the start of "a large wave of displacement affecting around 2,200 people" and were part of a policy aimed at "Judaising the neighbourhood".

In a statement released late on Friday by official news agency Wafa, the PA's foreign ministry "condemned the escalation by Israeli occupation authorities of forced eviction measures".



Travellers wait for vehicles after arriving at Sadarghat terminal by launch early yesterday morning from the southern districts as holidaymakers continue to return to the capital after celebrating Eid.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Indonesia begins enforcing social media ban for under-16s

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia began enforcing a social media ban for children under the age of 16 on Saturday, after a minister warned digital platforms there was "no room for compromise."

The Southeast Asian nation announced the ban this month citing threats from online pornography, cyberbullying and internet addiction, as concerns grow globally over the impact of social media on children's wellbeing.

Communications minister Meutya Hafid said at a press conference late Friday that digital platforms X and Bigo Live have fully complied with the new rules and adjusted their minimum user age in line with the regulation.

Other digital platforms operating in the country should "immediately align their products, features and services with applicable regulations," Meutya said.

"We reiterate that there is no room for compromise regarding compliance, and that every business entity operating in Indonesia is required to adhere to the laws in force within the country."

TikTok said in a statement late Friday that it was committed to complying with the regulation including "taking appropriate measures related to under-16 accounts" in close consultation with the ministry.

Fuel hoarders

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sell fuel from early morning until around 10:00am before halting sales, citing depleted supplies. Acting on information, a mobile court led by Executive Magistrate BMSR Alif found the fuel stored in 12 drums and later arranged to sell it at a government-fixed price.

In Mymensingh, 19,500 litres of diesel and 4,500 litres of petrol were seized from a mini filling station in Phulpur upazila headquarters yesterday. A court, led by UNO Sadia Islam Shema, fined the owner of Popy Traders Tk 2 lakh.

The seized fuel will be sold through other filling stations at the government-fixed price, she said.

In Kurigram, a mobile court seized 48 litres of petrol from the house of a BNP leader in Dantbhanga village under Roumarip upazila on Friday afternoon. The court, led by Executive Magistrate Rafiqur Rahman, fined the house owner's son Tk 10,000 for illegal stockpiling. Abu Jahan is the president of Ward No 4 BNP in Dantbhanga Union.

In Dinajpur, a mobile court raid yesterday recovered 380 litres of diesel and 34 litres of octane from a house in Birganj upazila and sentenced the owner to seven days' non-rigorous imprisonment. Another mobile court in Birol upazila sentenced a man to five days' non-rigorous imprisonment on Friday night for illegally hoarding and selling fuel.

In Gopalganj, a mobile court yesterday recovered around 1,500 litres of petrol and octane from a shop in the Panchuria area of the town and fined its owner Tk 9,000 for illegal storage.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Iqbal Hassan Mahmood conducted a surprise inspection of the Baghabari Oil Depot early yesterday, one of the country's leading fuel supply hubs.

Speaking to journalists, he said the visit aimed to monitor depot operations and fuel distribution.

"We are receiving reports of fuel shortages at filling stations despite regular supply from depots. That is why I have come here to monitor the distribution and supply process," he said.

[Our correspondents from Netrokona, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Lalmonirhat and Pabna contributed to the report]

Houthis enter the fray

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Iran kept up attacks on Israel and several Gulf states after hitting an air base in Saudi Arabia on Friday and wounding 12 US military personnel, two of them seriously, in one of the most serious breaches of US air defences so far.

Israel, which regularly faced missile attacks from the Houthis before the war, confirmed a missile had been fired at it from Yemen. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

With midterm elections due in November, the increasingly unpopular war has weighed on President Donald Trump's Republican Party, and he has appeared eager to end it soon, while also threatening escalation.

Demonstrators took to city streets across the US yesterday in the third "No Kings" rallies, described by organisers as a call to action against the war on Iran.

Rubio said on Friday that military operations were expected to be concluded in "weeks, not months" and echoed Trump's calls on European

Bangladesh bled \$68b in 10yrs

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It noted Bangladesh's vulnerability to trade-based money laundering, particularly through over-invoiced imports of capital machinery, which enjoys subsidised loans.

Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) are most commonly understood as money or value that crosses borders and is illegal in its source, transfer, or use.

"These flows matter for development and governance because they can weaken domestic resource mobilisation, reduce tax revenue, and constrain the fiscal space required for public services and infrastructure investment," the report said.

It added that larger economies with higher trade volumes show the biggest illicit outflows. China alone accounted for \$6.96 trillion in cumulative trade gaps over the decade, followed by Thailand (\$1.18 trillion) and India (\$1.06 trillion).

Annually, illicit flows accounted for 24.90 percent of China's trade with the world, 21.83 percent for India, 14.83 percent for Bhutan, and 15.49 percent for Nepal.

In December 2024, a white paper by the Bangladesh interim government found an average of \$16 billion was siphoned off annually during the 15 years of Awami League rule.

Although GFI lacked access to Bangladesh's data for 2014, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, it used available figures to estimate the average.

It noted that some nations show high gaps with regional partners, while countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka reflect that such discrepancies are significantly tied to trade with

Shwapno's database

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However, Nasir could not confirm how much data had been compromised. He said the company is preparing to file a case.

"When I checked the leaked database, I entered my wife's phone number and immediately found her record," said a customer of Shwapno in Dhaka's Gulshan.

Her name, purchase history, and detailed transaction data were all visible. "This is not a theoretical risk; it is real, personal and already exposed. If one record is this accessible, millions of others are equally vulnerable," the customer told The Daily Star.

Shwapno, a subsidiary of ACI, is working with domestic and international forensic experts, as well as the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of police, to investigate the breach and strengthen its cyber defences.

"We want to assure customers

advanced economies.

The report said commodity exports from Asia to advanced economies are often underpriced to evade resource rent taxes, while Asian financial hubs such as Singapore and Hong Kong act as intermediaries in misinvoicing schemes, providing transit hubs or booking centres for illicit trade profits.

In sum, trade misinvoicing with advanced economies is a "critical subset" of Asia's illicit flows, the report said. It shows that while South South trade misinvoicing is significant, the links to G7/OECD markets are "profound and cannot be ignored".

"Any solution will require joint efforts: Asian countries improving their controls and advanced countries tightening oversight of trade transactions, closing legal loopholes, and sharing data," it said.

Prof Selim Raihan of Dhaka University's economics department cautioned that figures on illicit flows may vary because of different methodologies used in different studies.

"The problem is that Bangladesh officially reports trade data very late. This is a major reason why it is difficult to compare official Bangladesh data with what other countries report," he told The Daily Star.

Raihan, also executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling, urged government institutions to engage with partner countries for cross-verification of financial data for curbing illicit flows.

He also stressed the need for a central bank or commerce ministry

system to check whether import prices match global market rates.

He added that many exporters do not bring their earnings to the country, and monitoring agencies must hold them accountable for such illicit practices.

Remittances, too, are used for laundering.

"If the money that should come through official channels comes via Hundi [illegal channels operated by groups], it means large amounts of foreign currency stay outside the country," Raihan said.

The GFI report warned that illicit flows deprive governments of essential revenues, undermine the rule of law, and hamper poverty reduction and infrastructure building.

"In effect, Asia's wealth is being partially siphoned offshore instead of invested at home, at a time when the region still faces significant development needs," it said.

As the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal deadline approaches, the report argued that curbing illicit flows is vital for Asia's prosperity.

"Without political will to tackle corruption within customs and enforce transparency, the nation's wealth will continue to benefit offshore interests rather than its own people," it said.

GFI recommended strengthening customs enforcement, leveraging regional agreements for data sharing, enhancing transparency in free trade zones, and promoting international collaboration to curb illicit financial flows.

as access to a verified contact number makes it easier to impersonate service providers and deceive users, the expert said.

According to the specialist, as banking services become increasingly phone dependent, both mobile and traditional accounts become more vulnerable if customer data is not properly protected.

The R3sistanc3 member also said that information about the products a customer purchases can be accessed by other companies as lead data.

The greatest risk lies in the phone number, which is collected through biometric methods, making it relatively easy for attackers to obtain a customer's personal information, the expert added.

In the 2024 Global National Cyber Security Index report, Bangladesh secured 35th place among 175 countries, outperforming India, which ranked 36th, and Pakistan, which stood at 85th.

across the Gulf, including Kuwait's International Airport, where drones caused significant damage to its radar system.

Fires were reported near the Khalifa container port in the United Arab Emirates' capital Abu Dhabi, after a missile was intercepted, while in Oman's Salalah port, a worker was injured.

In Iran, media said at least five people were killed in a US-Israeli attack on a residential unit in the northwestern city of Zanjan and in Tehran, the Iran University of Science and Technology was struck.

In Israel, the village of Eshtaol, near Jerusalem, was hit by an Iranian missile. Seven people were hospitalised, Israel's ambulance service said. One Israeli died on Friday.

Meanwhile, Ukraine agreed to cooperate on defence with the UAE and Qatar as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to both countries amid escalating tensions in the region.

Govt moves to digitise fuel sale

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operational depots, with allocations based on demand and aligned with the average daily year-on-year sales.

But supplies appear inadequate at most pumps, with long queues forming daily and many customers being denied fuel even after waiting for hours.

Though the government has withdrawn the temporary rationing system introduced earlier this month, most filling stations in Dhaka and other districts have been limiting fuel sales to serve more consumers.

Take Rajarbag Service Station near the Malibagh intersection and Ramna Petrol Pump near Matsya Bhaban, which have been capping fuel sales at Tk 200-500 for motorcycles and Tk 1,500-2,000 for cars.

Mohammad Nazmul Haque, owner of Ramna Petrol Pump, noted that many customers queued several times a day and hoped the government would take effective action against hoarding amid the global crisis.

Also president of the Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners' Association, Nazmul said they have proposed reintroducing rationing. However, they believe limiting sales to two litres for bikes and 10 litres for cars, as in the past, would not work and instead suggested a rationing system using cards issued by local police stations.

While acknowledging the need to curb hoarding, BPC Chairman Rezanur said the government is not returning to a rationing system and explained that a digitised system will ensure transparency in fuel distribution rather than restricting access. "It will be a digital system designed to ensure fair distribution so everyone gets sufficient fuel and hoarding is prevented."

Responding to concerns about accommodating farmers for whom fuel is essential for irrigation, the BPC chairman said the system is being designed with flexibility at the local level.

"We know farmers operate at the upazila level... with certification from local authorities, they will be able to purchase fuel."

The BPC chairman said the proposal is still under review, and no final decision has been taken yet. "Work is already underway... but we still need a little more time."

Meanwhile, the authorities reassured yesterday that the overall fuel stocks are adequate and the irregular distribution and panic driven buying have disrupted supply at the retail level in recent days.

DRIVES AGAINST HOARDING

The government has strengthened the ongoing countrywide drives against fuel hoarding, deployed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel at key depots, and introduced tighter

monitoring at petrol pumps.

A decision has been made to appoint "tag officers" at filling stations nationwide to strengthen oversight. In the Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan areas, BPC officials will take charge, while in districts, tag officers will be assigned by deputy commissioners and UNOs.

These officials will monitor fuel management and submit daily reports to the Energy and Mineral Resources Division.

Moreover, the BPC has revised fuel distribution hours at depots, bringing them forward by two hours. Dealers will now collect fuel from 7:00am to 3:00pm instead of the previous 9:00am to 5:00pm schedule.

The move is intended to allow filling stations receive fuel earlier.

QUEUES NATIONWIDE

This newspaper yesterday visited around 12 filling stations in the capital's Mohakhali, Malibagh, Ramna and Paribagh and found most of them were limiting fuel sales. All of them had long queues of motorcycles and cars.

Meanwhile, a government monitoring team visited seven filling stations between Asad Gate and Gabtoli yesterday and found repeat customers, especially motorcyclists, driving up octane demand by up to threefold, according to a ministry statement.

The fuel shortage has also gripped multiple districts across the country, including Bandarban, Moulvibazar, Shariatpur, and Narsingdi.

In Bandarban, though the petrol and octane supply were limited to between Tk 200 and Tk 500 for motorcycles at Uzma Oil Filling Station, octane supplies have run out completely. Diesel was also seen to be rationed at several pumps.

In Moulvibazar, filling stations remained largely inactive due to depleted stocks of petrol and octane. Staff reported long periods of idleness, while motorists struggled to find fuel. Diesel is being sold in limited quantities, leaving many vehicles parked.

In Shariatpur, all pumps have largely been closed for two consecutive days, with only half operating on a limited scale. Diesel shortages have particularly impacted fishermen along the Padma River, who now receive only 30-40 percent of their daily fuel requirement, forcing many to remain idle.

In Narsingdi, the crisis mirrors that seen elsewhere. Fuel allocations remain far below daily demand, with petrol supplied only once every three to four days and diesel distributed in limited amounts.

[Our correspondents from Bandarban, Moulvibazar, Shariatpur, and Narsingdi contributed to this report.]

Educationist Dilara Hafiz dies

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Mohammad Abul Hossain Chowdhury and her mother was Karimunnesa Khatun Chowdhury.

She obtained her master's degree in history from the University of Dhaka in 1969 and then began her career as a lecturer at Government Eden College.

Later, she served as principal of Eden College, held positions at Suhrawardy College, and went on to serve as chair of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board and as director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education.

President Mohammad Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, along with opposition leaders, expressed their condolences over Dilara's passing.

Deputy Speaker Kayser Kamal, Chief Whip Nurul Islam, other whips, lawmakers, and officials and staff of the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat also

expressed deep shock and sorrow.

Expressing profound sorrow, President Shahabuddin, in a condolence message, prayed for the eternal peace of her departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family, reports BSS.

"The nation will remember with gratitude the outstanding contribution of the late Dilara Hafiz in the field of the country's education," he wrote.

In a separate message, Prime Minister Tarique said late Dilara Hafiz was a distinguished educationist and social worker. "With her death, the nation has lost a noble educationist."

Opposition leader and Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the family of the deceased. "As a spouse, she made notable contributions to her family and society, which will be remembered with respect," he added.